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United States Senate

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
 WASHINGTON, DC 20510

Executive Registry

85- 3078

June 20, 1985

The President
 The White House
 Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Earlier today, I was asked to lead the opposition to a proposal by Senator Byrd and others to establish a National Commission on Security and Espionage. Such a Commission would have had four members appointed by the Congress and four by the President. We who opposed the proposal prevailed by a 50-48 margin.

I accepted the task of opposing the Byrd amendment because of a strong belief that the proposal would delay action on this immediate and serious problem for at least 18 months and probably longer. We are all committed to move as quickly as possible -- and that is most appropriately done within the existing structure. A crucial element in my conviction that we can make the current system respond quickly was the informal commitment that I had received from the Administration to full and complete support for the Senate Intelligence Committee's current study of the Soviet intelligence threat and U.S. counterintelligence and security programs.

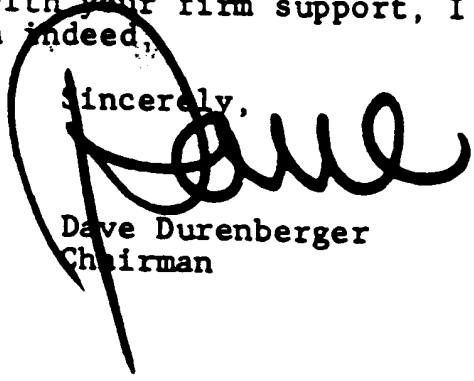
It will be helpful to the Committee to have your personal commitment to Administration support of our enterprise, at each stage: determining how best to examine the problem; jointly developing recommendations; and ensuring implementation of improvements. Such an explicit commitment will not only facilitate the work of the Committee, but also help us when the Byrd proposal is raised again, which is quite likely.

You and we share an historic opportunity -- both to dramatically improve U.S. counterintelligence and

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security and to demonstrate how Congress and the Executive can work together to achieve progress in sensitive intelligence areas. With your firm support, I am sure we can accomplish much indeed.

Sincerely,



Dave Durenberger
Chairman

cc: The Honorable George P. Shultz
The Honorable Caspar W. Weinberger
The Honorable Edwin Meese, III
The Honorable William Webster
The Honorable William J. Casey